



Building and Sustaining Readiness Across Forces Command Formations

■ By Maj. Gen. Flem B. "Donnie" Walker Jr.



Staff Sgt. George McGraw, a unit movement officer from the 86th Combat Support Hospital, verifies equipment on his manifest on March 26, 2016, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. (Photo by Sgt. Leejay Lockhart)

FEATURES

“Readiness is our No. 1 priority ... there is no other top priority. If you ever think you’re going to need an Army, if you think you are going to use an Army, then you better have a good one, and it better be ready.”

—Gen. Robert B. Abrams,
Forces Command
Commanding General

For the past 14 years, Army forces have trained for and executed combat deployments to engage in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations and support partner nations’ forces. They have done this with great success but are using a readiness model that is far different from what the Army needs in today’s operational environment.

ARFORGEN

The Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model was the right approach for the previous operational environment and readiness demands. Units focused on manning, equipping, and training to build readiness for a known mission and a relatively short deployment and expected to consume that readiness during the deployment.

Units returning from a deployment went over the “readiness cliff” by design. They lost trained leaders and Soldiers to permanent change of station moves and professional development opportunities.

Equipment used during deployment was turned in for months of required reset, and left-behind equipment was reclaimed from a low-usage status after long-term storage. Units then started the process of rebuilding readiness throughout their training phases, making themselves available and ready for the next deployment.

ARFORGEN has led to significant atrophy of several fundamental components of logistics readiness at all echelons because it does not focus on building and maintaining sustained readiness. Inadvertently, this has resulted in Soldiers not knowing how to properly maintain their equipment and leaders not being skilled in managing maintenance, supply discipline, and property accountability. This way of doing business has created an unprecedented buildup of excess equipment and supplies and a lack of fiscal stewardship.

Sustainable Readiness Model

As we transition from ARFOR-

GEN to the Sustainable Readiness Model, our formations must be surge-ready but rotationally focused. Units must be ready to deploy at any time and train under decisive action versus COIN only conditions.

Units are back to fully using all equipment authorized by their modified tables of organization and equipment. They are exercising vehicles and systems at a higher operating tempo and conducting more training at home station. This has increased the demand signal for critical class IX (repair parts) from our industrial base and has led to longer lead times for parts.

Our Army does not have the resources to withstand a post-mission readiness cliff. Therefore we must focus our attention on enhancing the fundamental logistics components needed to master materiel readiness.

The Army now faces a far different operational environment—one that requires sustained readiness of our units. The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World calls for units that will not fall off the readiness cliff. The Army has to build enduring and sustained readiness that enables it to engage in a wide range of ongoing missions, including combat deployments, theater security cooperation training exercises, homeland defense, and little-to-no-notice global response requirements. In doing so, units must also sustain their capabilities to meet any and all unknown follow-on missions.

State of FORSCOM Logistics

The mission of Forces Command (FORSCOM) is to train and prepare a combat-ready, globally responsive total force in order to build and sustain readiness to meet combatant command requirements. To complete that mission, the commanding general of FORSCOM has implemented six priorities, “The Freedom 6,” for all FORSCOM leaders:

- Maximize unit readiness.
- Operationalize the Army Total Force Policy.

- Master the fundamentals.
- Strengthen leader development.
- Care for Soldiers, civilians, and families.
- Inform the future force.

To reinforce the FORSCOM mission and the commander's priorities, the FORSCOM G-4 is promoting the State of FORSCOM Logistics white paper, which was published in 2015, to address the state of logistics and materiel readiness throughout the command. The white paper has become the basis of a FORSCOM campaign that focuses on key fundamentals of logistics and materiel readiness.

The white paper describes some of the challenges associated with each of the seven logistics components found in figure 1. Commanders and their staffs should focus resources on each component simultaneously. This will ensure units have the right resources needed to keep their equipment ready to meet not only the Army maintenance standard but also, more importantly, the readiness requirements of the combatant commanders.

Investing in the seven logistics components described in the white paper will deliver materiel readiness to units and sustain their readiness during home-station and combat training center (CTC) training and while deployed. The logistics components are logistics leader training, equipment distribution and redistribution, excess divestiture, maintenance management, supply discipline, total Army interoperability, and fiscal stewardship.

Logistics Leader Training

Logistics leader training underpins all of the other components of logistics readiness. The effectiveness of any readiness program starts with how well leaders are trained and developed to lead their Soldiers to achieve readiness standards.

Leaders at all echelons need to know the fundamentals of supply and maintenance well enough to lead their Soldiers to meet equipment

readiness objectives in accordance with Army supply and maintenance policies.

FORSCOM must adopt a culture that values officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers who possess the technical skills needed for command logistics discipline and managing scarce resources.

FORSCOM encourages its subordinate commands to conduct routine unit command maintenance, formerly referred to as "motor stables," as a regularly scheduled training event. The term "unit command maintenance" emphasizes the commander's involvement.

Company-level leaders must be trained in the motor pool before they lead their platoons to a range, a local training area, or a CTC. Commanders also are encouraged to conduct maintenance terrain walks to develop maintenance leaders.

The Combined Arms Support Command has developed a maintenance terrain walk training video that provides units with a resource

for implementing walks for leader professional development and overall readiness. A link is available through the Sustainment Unit One Stop webpage: http://www.cascom.army.mil/g_staff/g3/SUOS/index.htm.

Equipment Distribution

To achieve Army readiness goals, units must continue to manage the distribution and redistribution of authorized equipment. Units cannot train or deploy without having the right type and amount of equipment on hand (EOH).

To increase EOH readiness ratings, FORSCOM has engaged in a campaign called the Unit Equipping and Reuse Working Group-Expanded (UERWG-E). This is an expanded adaptation of an earlier effort designed to reset EOH readiness for units upon redeployment.

The UERWG-E program is designed to accomplish two major objectives: first, to identify equipment shortages and sourcing solutions in



Figure 1. The Forces Command's Seven Components of Logistics Readiness.



Army mechanics work on the underbelly of a humvee in the maintenance tent of the 542nd Support Maintenance Company on Feb. 18, 2016, at Fort Polk, Louisiana. (Photo by Sgt. Aaron Ellerman)

order to maximize EOH readiness and, second, to identify excess equipment for transfer or turn-in. Transferring equipment to other Army commands, Army service component commands, or a National Guard or Army Reserve unit, helps build EOH readiness elsewhere in

the force.

FORSCOM conducted UERWG–E events at 11 major home-station installations in fiscal year 2015. The next round of UERWG–E events is scheduled for this fiscal year and will have greater command emphasis on building readiness.

Basic issue items (BII) and components of end items (COEI)	Ensure all authorized BII and COEI are present or on order.
Modification work orders (MWOs)	Ensure all routine, emergency, and urgent MWOs are applied and reported in the Modification Management Information System.
Scheduled services	Perform equipment services within the scheduled service intervals.
Higher level repairs	Corrective actions requiring higher level maintenance are put on a work order.
Parts and supplies	Ensure parts that are not on hand are on valid funded requisition.
Repairs and services	Complete corrective actions when required parts are on hand.
All faults identified	Use technical manual 10/20 checks to identify faults.
Fully mission capable	If all are complete, the equipment is fully mission capable.

Figure 2. The Army maintenance standard.

Excess Divestiture

Under the ARFORGEN cycle, units accumulated excess supplies and equipment at an unprecedented rate. Collectively, FORSCOM has thousands of pieces of excess equipment, both standard and non-standard, piled up at various home stations. No organization, from the unit supply room to the Army Materiel Command (AMC), is structured to deal with such a staggering amount of excess equipment, about half of which must be brought up to 10/20 standard for transfer.

FORSCOM is teaming with the Defense Logistics Agency, Army G-4, AMC, and subordinate units to create an excess equipment divestiture plan that will ensure surge capabilities for each stakeholder. It will be designed to unburden units, transfer excess equipment to units with shortages, and ship pure excess to depots to be included in foreign military sales, commercial auction, or demilitarization. This plan is an extension of the UERWG–E effort.

Maintenance Management

Arguably second only to leader training in level of importance is maintenance management, which encompasses the range of tools and activities needed to develop maintenance policy and resource and plan, train, and execute maintenance operations.

FORSCOM’s command training guidance for fiscal year 2016 directs that units “will execute a combined arms training strategy that integrates sustainment training.” The guidance goes on to explain that maintaining equipment to the 10/20 standard—in accordance with Army Regulation 750-1, Army Materiel Maintenance Policy (for ground systems), and Army Regulation 700-138, Army Logistics Readiness and Sustainability (for aviation systems)—is a readiness imperative. (See figure 2.)

The FORSCOM guidance makes it clear that commanders are responsible for maintaining their equipment

to standard during home-station and CTC training and while deployed.

The guidance further requires commanders to carefully manage all resources (manning, funding, facilities, equipment, and time) to achieve 90-percent operational readiness rates for ground fleets and 75-percent fully mission capable rates for aviation fleets.

A critical element for achieving fleet readiness in both ground and air systems is teaching and training operators and crews how to maintain their gear. The FORSCOM guidance directs commanders to train their leaders and Soldiers to perform preventive maintenance checks and services and scheduled services on their equipment as a qualification that is “no different from qualifying on a rifle, tank or aerial gunnery range.”

Commanders are now focusing on the fundamentals of maintenance training in an effort to master their weapon systems.

Supply Discipline

Disciplined maintenance programs require disciplined supply operations, including the management of authorized stockage lists (ASLs), shop stocks, and bench stocks. FORSCOM is working closely with AMC to right size ASLs and optimize shop stocks and bench stocks based on captured demand and use data.

Ensuring disciplined demand at the unit level is critical to driving readiness throughout the organic and commercial industrial bases. Disciplined demand drives down customer wait time and drives up availability and operational readiness. FORSCOM brigade combat team and combat aviation brigade commanders must own the ASL review process to help shape the breadth and depth of the ASL, particularly the stock of readiness drivers and shop stocks.

Total Army Interoperability

FORSCOM is enforcing the Army Total Force Policy by includ-

ing it in command training guidance, building readiness through the Army synchronization and resourcing process, and designing and implementing the Sustainable Readiness Model to replace ARFORGEN.

The Total Force Policy presents some unique challenges and opportunities in the materiel readiness

class IX requirements (especially shop stock), cross-leveling excess stock to fill shortages, and imposing logistics policies that prevent waste.

The FORSCOM G-4 staff uses several tools to gauge the effectiveness of our efforts to build and sustain materiel readiness in our formations, including the Materiel

“Restoring our ability to execute expeditionary logistics will only be accomplished by leaders who know what right looks like, and then coach, teach, and mentor that understanding across their formations.”

—Lt. Gen. Gustave “Gus” Perna, Army G-4

arena, particularly in maintenance and supply policy compliance and readiness funding.

The FORSCOM G-4 staff is taking a wider view of materiel readiness across Army Reserve and National Guard units. It is identifying opportunities for equipment transfers to improve EOH readiness, monitoring fleet readiness, and helping to shape echelons-above-brigade sustainment training opportunities through partnership training and CTC rotations.

Additionally, the FORSCOM G-4 is participating in the Total Army Analysis process to ensure sustainment capabilities are adequately represented.

Fiscal Stewardship

The State of FORSCOM Logistics white paper addresses fiscal stewardship as a key component to building and sustaining materiel readiness. One look at the program objective memorandum for 2018 to 2022 reveals a startling funding shortfall.

As logisticians we need to ensure we protect precious operation and maintenance dollars by validating

Common Operating Picture system to continuously monitor fleet readiness, the Net-Centric Unit Status Report application to collect monthly readiness rates, a monthly FORSCOM logistics readiness review that spotlights select elements of the white paper, and a semiannual G-4 summit that focuses on developing strategic solutions to the most pressing materiel readiness challenges.

Every aspect of materiel readiness is relatively complex, but all are fundamental to the mission of delivering trained and ready forces to our combatant commanders. By focusing on the seven components of logistics readiness, FORSCOM is on track to reclaim mastery of its logistics core competencies and ensure the sustained materiel readiness of our warfighting formations.

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